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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3731
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 3539
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2101
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0430
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 1051
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1783
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RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ SEP LIMA 5688
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 1237
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4047
RUEHMU/AMEMBASSY MANAGUA 0124
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 0325
RUEHQD/AMEMBASSY QUITO 1914
RUEHSJ/AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE 0887
RUEHSN/AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR 0279
RUEHTG/AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA 0153
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
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SUBJECT: CONTROVERSY OVER FARC CONNECTIONS IN CHILE

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Bachelet administration has come under fire from the opposition for not taking action on information provided by the Colombian government in May that identified contacts between Chilean sympathizers and Colombia FARC rebels. The evidence surfaced from emails found on the computers of deceased FARC leader Raul Reyes. One official at La Moneda resigned (emails describe him as a collaborator), but the GOC claims there are no operational FARC ties within Chile. Annoyed over the leaked information, the Interior Minister accused opposition Senators Pinera and Espina of being duped by Colombian intelligence. President Bachelet said President Uribe promised to investigate who passed the information to the opposition leaders. END SUMMARY.

The "Leaked" Report

¶2. (SBU) A series of public revelations about contacts between Chilean sympathizers and the FARC has become the source of the latest spat between the Bachelet administration and the Alianza opposition. The Head of Chile's National Intelligence Agency (ANI) Gustavo Villalobos traveled to Colombia in mid-May to receive a Colombian intelligence report detailing Chilean-FARC contacts derived from the captured hard drives of deceased FARC leader Raul Reyes. By early September the media began to report on the content of the emails.

¶3. (U) In July, Presidential candidate Sebastian Pinera and Renovacion Nacional Senators Andres Allamand and Alberto Espina traveled to Colombia to meet President Uribe, and during that visit press reports suggest they obtained a copy of the Colombian report. In turn, Espina on August 5 passed the information to Chile's Attorney General to investigate whether a crime had been committed. President Bachelet said on September 19 that President Uribe assured her that he did not know about or authorize the release of the intelligence data to the opposition leaders.

Where's the Beef?

¶4. (U) According to the 35-page Colombian intel report, the emails on Reyes' hard drives identified a FARC support structure in Chile. Most of the sympathizers are members of Chile's Communist Party, including its President Guillermo Teillier and Secretary General Lautaro Carmona. The report also refers to members of the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Movement (MPMR) and the Revolutionary Leftist Movement (MIR). The support group reportedly maintains the internet web page of the Bolivarian Continental Coordinator (CCB).

¶5. (U) The most interesting email is about La Moneda's Communications Secretariat employee, Hugo Guzman. A Mexican FARC support cell in April 2005 informed Reyes of a Chilean journalist (Guzman) who "helped us a lot" and returned to Chile after having worked several years in Mexico. To keep in touch, a contact in Mexico notes that Guzman was taught how to send and receive encrypted messages, but he is a "poor student" and did not learn the technique. "Companero" Guzman, Reyes is informed, provided the group in Mexico a computer and printer.

¶6. (U) In March 2006, a Chilean contact emailed Reyes asking about the possibility of providing "training" to Mapuche groups who want to liberate a zone in southern Chile. Another message told Reyes that the MPMR was in the final stages of preparation for the six-month training Reyes had proposed. An email in 2001 mentioned a MIR contact who offered up to 8 tons of M-16s, but noted the FARC would need to transport the weapons from their hiding place in northern Chile.

Opposition: GOC Not Concerned About FARC Ties

¶7. (U) The opposition has criticized the Bachelet administration for demonstrating poor judgment and potentially endangering national security. The opposition leaders have highlighted the GOC's failure to fully investigate Chilean links to a terrorist organization. They are critical of the GOC for maintaining a potential FARC collaborator employed at La Moneda since May. The Alianza also points to a lack of GOC concern over presumed FARC ties with Chile's Communist Party.

¶8. (U) The opposition has called for the removal of the national intelligence chief Villalobos for incompetence and for his delay in passing the information to the judiciary (which will determine if the FARC sympathizers have broken the law). Neither Pinera nor Espina have revealed who provided them with the controversial FARC-Chile information.

Interior Minister Comes Out Swinging

¶9. (U) The Bachelet Administration is emphatic that there are no operational ties between the FARC and Chilean groups. During a Congressional hearing on September 15, Interior Minister Edmundo Perez Yoma claimed Colombia's intelligence organizations manipulated RN presidential candidate Pinera and RN Senator Espina into revealing details of the Colombian report. Perez Yoma said both Pinera and Espina were "victims" of an intelligence operation.

¶10. (SBU) The GOC has been inconsistent in its statements about Colombia's role. Perez Yoma said the Colombian government wants to internationalize the FARC problem, and make it appear that the FARC issue not only affects Colombia, but also the whole of South America. Perez Yoma noted on September 17 that the Colombians performed a similar operation in Brazil. Foreign Minister Foxley considers the issue closed; he spoke with his Colombian counterpart who assured him that the Colombian government did not pass the report to opposition leaders. However, some in the Concertacion want a formal protest lodged against Colombia. President Bachelet's remarks suggest the GOC is leaving the onus on Uribe to uncover the source of the leaked information.

¶11. (U) When the emails about Hugo Guzman hit the press on September 9, he resigned immediately. The administration lamented his departure, noting the mere appearance of ones' name in an email proves nothing and that Guzman's name had been smeared unjustly. In Mexico for nine years, Guzman had worked as the international news chief for TV Mexicana (Channel 11) and later for "La Jornada" daily. He denied being a FARC sympathizer, but admitted he had interviewed

Raul Reyes and other rebels as part of his journalistic duties reporting on the Colombian and Central American peace processes.

Political Melodrama

¶12. (SBU) Comment: The FARC-related saga is the latest in a series of high-profile disagreements, replacing Transantiago as the lead acrimonious issue between the GOC and the opposition. As on previous occasions, the opposition leaders are intent on embarrassing the Bachelet administration on security-related issues.

The GOC is focusing on how the opposition obtained the report and not the substance of the FARC emails. The publication in March of photographs (from Reyes' computers) of two Chilean Communist Party youths at Reyes' camp days before his death help bolster the opposition's case -- that these emails were more than mere solidarity exchanges.

SIMONS